

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08044635 8

01 May, 1970











THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS

OF THE

SIGNERS

OF THE

MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,

OF THE

*20TH OF May, 1775.*

Delivered at Charlotte, N. C., on the 24th of May, 1875,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

MECKLENBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

BY

JOHN H. WHEELER.

*Author of the History of North Carolina.*

---

Published by Order of the Mecklenburg Historical Society.

---

CHARLOTTE:  
OBSERVER BOOK AND JOB POWER PRESS PRINT.  
1875.





THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS  
OF THE  
SIGNERS  
OF THE  
MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,  
OF THE  
*20TH OF May, 1775.*

---

Delivered at Charlotte, N. C., on the 24th of May, 1875,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
X  
MECKLENBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

BY

JOHN H. WHEELER,

*Author of the History of North Carolina.*

---

Published by Order of the Mecklenburg Historical Society.

---

CHARLOTTE:  
OBSERVER BOOK AND JOB POWER PRESS PRINT.  
1875.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

CHARLOTTE, N. C., May 22, 1875.

DEAR SIR—We have been appointed a Committee in behalf of the Mecklenburg Historical Society to notify you that at the meeting last night you were requested to address the Association on the general subject of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, and especially on the Personal Character and Services of the Signers of the same, and to ask your acceptance and to arrange the time and place as may be agreeable to yourself.

Respectfully,

R. I. McDOWELL,  
WM. M. SHIPP;  
W. J. YATES,  
M. M. ORR,  
T. F. DRAYTON,

*Committee of the Mecklenburg Historical Society.*

To COL. JOHN H. WHEELER.

---

CHARLOTTE, N. C., May 22, 1875.

*Messrs. R. I. McDowell, Wm. M. Shipp, W. J. Yates, M. M. Orr, T. F. Drayton,  
Committee:*

GENTLEMEN—I have received your note, in behalf of the Mecklenburg Historical Society, communicating a request that I should address that body on the subject of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of the 20th of May, 1775, and especially on the Personal Character and Public Services of the Signers of the same. Your note requests my acceptance and kindly allows me to fix the time and place. It will afford me much satisfaction to contribute in any way towards aiding in the universal pean of joy that swells from every portion of North Carolina on this auspicious occasion, and I will fix the time at 8:30 P. M. on Monday next, at the Court House, in this place.

Yours,

JOHN H. WHEELER.

P. S.—May I be allowed to suggest to your fellow-citizens, who may have any records, mementoes, or traditions relative to the period of 1775, to deposit them with your Society for future reference.

J. H. W.



# COL. WHEELER'S LECTURE

ON THE

## Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence,

DELIVERED AT CHARLOTTE, May 24, 1875.

*Gentlemen of the Mecklenburg Historical Society:*

I regard it as an omen favorable to the success of your excellent Society that the first address (which by your constitution is annually to be made) should occur so near the Centennial Anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. It is an epoch in history. It marks the age in which we live.

The assemblage of such a concourse, larger than ever before assembled in our State on any similar occasion, of the lovely and the learned, of the generous and the good, from every section of our Republic; the perfect order and decorum which prevailed; the propitious season granted to the occasion by Providence, rendered still more genial by your gentle climate; the joyous countenances of the thousands of happy and grateful persons, the brilliant displays of eloquence and learning, all combined to make the occasion long to be remembered.

After such a carnival of enjoyment and excitement any further attempt to interest you is one of danger and difficulty. I feel and appreciate the position, and approach it with sincere emotion, fearing lest my success may not be equal to my wishes, or your expectations. I shall speak of the deeds of the illustrious dead; and trust that no word will fall from my lips unworthy of this high and holy occasion.

"And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that doth prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me. What in me is dark,  
Illuminate. What is low, raise and support.  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men."

In addressing you on this occasion I

shall endeavor to be concise, rather than declamatory; useful, than interesting:

1. I propose to trace with a rapid hand the early history of our country from the first landing of the Englishman, to the date of the event which we have just commemorated.

2. To analyse the characters of the first settlers of this State, their love of freedom and impatience of restraint, which principles led to

3. Independence from all foreign rule or powers.

4. Trace the consequences of that declaration, not only on our own country, but upon the destinies of the civilized world, and close my address with some

5. Historical reminiscences of Charlotte, and some biographical sketches of the Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of 20th May, 1775.

These are the subjects to which your attention is invited.

I speak to North Carolinians, as a North Carolinian, and of North Carolina.

### THE FIRST LANDING OF THE ENGLISHMAN

In these United States was on the shores of North Carolina. It was in the month of July, 1584, that the fleet fitted out, under the auspices of Sir Walter Raleigh, and under command of Amidas and Barlow, rested at Roanoke Island.

An accurate and detailed account of this expedition has been preserved. In the language of the historian, "they found here a people most gentle, loving and faithful; void of all guile and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age." \*

\* Hakluyt, Vol. II, p. 297.

They landed on the Island on the 13th of July, 1584. Captain Amidas, after returning thanks to Almighty God for their safe deliverance, took possession of the same in these memorable words:

"We take possession of this land in right of the Queen, Most Excellent Majesty, as rightful Queen and Princess, of ye same, to be delivered over to ye use of Sir Walter Raleigh, according to her Majestic's letters patent, under her great seal."

Here the foundations of the Republic were laid; here the city of Raleigh was first established; and here the first child of English parents was born on this continent.\*

Here was the cradle in which was rocked the mighty infant whose gigantic limbs now stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean:

Time-honored land, where hope and faith  
Sought refuge in a night of gloom.  
And reared Freedom's altar by the Eagle's nest.

It were a tedious task, and not germane to the present occasion to describe the trials, privations and sufferings undergone by these colonists. Severe as they were, they were borne with patience and fortitude.

It had been about eighty years since Columbus discovered America, (1492,) to the time of the events we are now discussing, and about the same period from this time to the date of the charter of Charles the Second, (1663,) when a Governor was appointed for Carolina. It is here to be remarked as a piece of mournful history of our State that both the Proprietor of the colony, and its first Governor were victims of tyranny and both met a tragic fate. But they never die who perish in a great cause. As long as the pellucid waters of the lake of the Dismal Swamp shall reflect the "light of the fire-fly's lamp" will the name of Drummond be preserved, and as long as the majestic oak, the monarch of the woods, shall grow, so long will the name of Raleigh be revered.

\* As early as the 12th of August, 1584, at Raleigh's colony on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, the native Chieftain, Manteo, was admitted into fellowship of Christ's flock by holy baptism; and five days after, Eleanor, daughter of the Governor, and the wife of Ananias Dare, was delivered of a daughter in Roanoke, and ye same was christened there the Sunday following, and because this child was the first Christian born in Virginia she was named Virginia Dare.—*Hakluyt*, II. 314.

The Legislature of 1870 has embalmed their names by calling the county and town after them.

The government, so far as any was exercised, was vested in the Lords Proprietors, by the charter of Charles the Second. The Proprietors were the Earl of Clarendon, Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Craven, Lord Berkley, Lord Ashley, Sir Geo. Carteret, Sir John Colleton and Sir William Berkley. Their charter comprised all the country between the Atlantic and Pacific between 31 and 36 degrees. These Proprietors each had a deputy to represent him in the Province, and in some cases the Proprietor himself resided in this country. Sir William Berkley, in 1663, was the Governor of Virginia; and by instructions from Lord Clarendon and other Lords Proprietors, was instructed to appoint a Governor for Albemarle and six persons as counsellors.

#### THE CHARACTER AND PRINCIPLES OF THE FIRST SETTLERS OF NORTH CAROLINA.

The authentic record of the Legislative history of North Carolina begins with the autumn of 1669. But with such a people laws were not necessary. They had no need to be commanded to do right, or forbidden to do wrong, for they adhered to the one and abhorred the other.

"Here was a colony of men scattered among forests, hermits with wives and children resting on the bosom of nature in perfect harmony with the wilderness of their gentle clime. The planters of Albemarle were men led to the choice of their residence from a hatred of restraint. Are there any who doubt man's capacity for self-government? Let them study the history of North Carolina. Its inhabitants were restless and turbulent in their imperfect submission to a government imposed from abroad; the administration of the colony was firm, humane, and tranquil when they were left to take care of themselves. Any government but one of their own institution was oppressive."†

The great historian of our age, Mr. Bancroft, a writer whose labors have immortalized him, whose pen has touched on every historical subject, and on each subject touched on it has adorned, and whose writings have done justice to our State, thus records:

"North Carolina was settled by the freest of the free. The settlers were gentle in their tempers, of serene

†Chalmers, 325, quoted by Bancroft, II, 151.



minds, enemies to violence and bloodshed. Not all the successive revolutions had kindled vindictive passions; freedom, entire freedom, was enjoyed without anxiety as without guarantees. The charities of life were scattered at their feet like the flowers of their meadows.”\*

For more than half of a century did the rule of the Proprietary Government exist. The Governors appointed by these Proprietors to rule in this Province, with a few exceptions, were unworthy of their trust. To oppress the people, to aggrandize themselves at all hazards, seemed to be their chief object. The history of this period is full of absolute tyranny and oppression on one hand, and of steady opposition on the other.

Gov. Burrington, who was Governor of the Lords Proprietors, and also under the Crown in 1730 (for at this date the Proprietors, except Lord Granville, reconveyed for a valuable consideration to the Crown all their rights) in an official dispatch to the Duke of New Castle, Secretary of State, dated 20th February, 1730, thus accurately describes the people† of North Carolina at this time:

“The inhabitants of North Carolina are not industrious, but subtle and crafty to admiration; always behaved insolently to their Governors; some of them they have imprisoned; drove others out of the country, and at other times have set up two or three supported by men under arms. All the Governors that have ever lived in this colony, lived in fear of the people (except myself) and dreaded their assemblies. These people are neither to be cajoled nor outwitted. Whenever any Governor attempts to effect anything by these means, he will lose his labor and show his ignorance.”

He complains that the people gave no presents (to bribe) their Governor.

The Governors, appointed by the Crown, if improved by education and public services, did not restrain their haughty bearing towards the people—nor did the people relax in their sturdy advocacy of their rights and their devotion to liberty. The population at

this time (1730) as stated in a dispatch from Governor Burrington, was

Whites.....	30,000
Negroes.....	6,000
Indians .....	800
Total .....	36,900

The population was at this time chiefly confined to the eastern part of the State—to the Albemarle and Cape Fear country. The unfortunate attempt of the Scotch people to free themselves from illegal authority, and to place Charles Edward, grand son of James the II. on the throne, which culminated on the fatal field of Culloden, (16th April, 1746,) caused many to emigrate to America. They settled in the western part of the State. The oppression of Ferdinand in the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Moravia drove many of these Moravians to America. Many from Ireland, after the rebellion of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyreconnell, came first to Pennsylvania, thence to North Carolina. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. (in 1685,) lost to France thousands of her best citizens. Governor Dobbs received a petition from Rowan county in 1754, which states that the inhabitants of this section were composed of almost all nations of Europe. The prudence of the German, the ardor of the Irish, the sagacity of the Scotch, and the enthusiasm of the French, were fit material for the formation of a great people. Deeply imbued with the spirit of liberty, civil and religious, having endured oppression and tyranny, such a people were but little fit to submit to unlawful authority. These were

“—Men who knew their rights,  
And knowing, dared maintain.”

During the long administration of Gov. Gabriel Johnston of nearly twenty years, and of Gov. Arthur Dobbs of ten years, the people of North Carolina were peaceful; for these rulers were prudent and forbearing. But serious troubles commenced with the administration of William Tryon, who succeeded Gov. Dobbs, and was Governor of North Carolina under the crown from 1765 to 1771, and whose name is preserved by one of your principal streets in Charlotte, and by a mountain in Polk county.‡ He was a soldier, “sudden

\* Bancroft, History of the U. S., Vol. 1, pp. 467, 472.

† MSS Documents procured from Rolls Office in London by me.

‡ Williamson's History of North Carolina, vol. 11, p. 117.

and quick in quarrel." Trained to arms, he viewed the sword as the true sceptre of government. He was known to the Indians by the significant sobriquet of "Great Wolf." He was a tyrant in government and a bigot in religion. By his course he was only the unconscious instrument of bringing about the results which the inexorable logic of events rendered inevitable. An ancient maxim is, that

"The mills of the Gods grind slowly,  
But they grind exceeding small."

The people of Mecklenburg county were not slow in exhibiting to royal power their sturdy temper and disposition. A grant from the crown of a large body of land in Mecklenburg county had been made to Henry Eustice McCullock, who employed John Frohawk to locate these lands. The people of Mecklenburg rose in their might, seized the surveyor, Frohawk, and drove him out of the county. They seized Tryon's ammunition, under convoy from Charleston, at Phifer's Hill, and completely destroyed it in December, 1771. These were but the buzzing of that Hornet's Nest that stung so fatally royal authority.

But Tryon had to witness in his own palace, and surrounded by his forces, evidence more decided of the spirit of the people. The stamp act passed 1765, this produced great excitement, and when the sloop of war, the Diligence, arrived in the Cape Fear river. The men of New Hanover, led by Ashe and Waddell, seized the sloop of war's boat, hoisted it on a cart, marched into Wilmington, and demanded of Gov. Tryon to produce the Stamp Master, Houston, who was a member of his council and an inmate of his house. On his refusal, preparations were made to set fire to the house, and destroy with it the Governor, Stamp Master, and the menials of power. This brought forth the Stamp Master. He was seized by the people, carried to the market house, and there forced to take a solemn oath not to attempt to execute his office. Upon this he was released, and he returned to his discomfited and enraged Master.

Now this act, not done under any disguise, but by men well known, not at night, but in broad day, not upon harmless carriers of freight, or the crew of a private vessel, but upon the agent of royalty itself, has hardly been

known out of the State, and some profess to disbelieve it. The throwing overboard the tea at Boston, by men disguised as Indians and at night, has been justly lauded and "pealed and chimed upon every tongue of fame." Why deny to our forefathers a similar meed of renown? The Centennial Anniversary of this event was celebrated in the rotundo of the Capitol at Washington, and the heroic acts of the Boston men lauded to the heavens, while the more daring deeds of the men of New Hanover is hardly known in our own State.

But an event of more historic importance occurred during the administration of Tryon, by which the first blood of the Colonists in this country was spilled by royal arms. The exactions of the crown officers, by way of taxes, from the Governor to the lowest bailiff, were intolerable, and finding that no redress could be obtained, exasperated to desperation, the people rose in arms. These were without practiced leaders, and any military discipline or organization. Tryon raised an army of more than a thousand men, met them on the banks of Alamance, on the 16th May, 1771, and after a conflict of two hours, the Regulators, as they were called, were dispersed, leaving twenty dead on the field. The royal forces had one officer killed and one dangerously wounded, and about sixty men killed, wounded and missing. Doubtless the Regulators were guilty of some excesses; but they were grievously oppressed. The principles that they asserted and fought for were the same that carried our fathers to the battlefield a few years later.

Shortly after the battle of Alamance, Tryon went to New York, where he had been appointed Royal Governor, and was succeeded by Josiah Martin, destined to be the last vestige of royal authority in North Carolina.

It has been with some care to condense this detail of history, which, doubtless, to many of you is so familiar that it sounds "as a twice-told tale," yet it was demanded by our programme, for it brings us to the period we have this day met to commemorate. We have pointed out the spot of the landing of the Englishmen in our State, we have analyzed the character of the early founders of our State, we have examined and manifested the principles

and motives of action that guided them, and which led to the epoch

#### OF INDEPENDENCE.

Gov. Martin was more of a politician than a soldier. He endeavored to propitiate the people by kindness and a course of conduct contrasting favorably with that of Tryon. But the hour had come when royal power had to cease. However potent a Prospero Governor Martin might be, he could not avert the tempest now gathering around him. The heavy tread of the warrior buckling on his armor, preparing for the contest of arms, was heard. The people were up and ready for the conflict.

But that "the men of Mecklenburg should, in advance of all other portions of this continent, have assembled on the 20th May, 1775, on this consecrated spot and declare themselves free and independent of the crown of England, and for the maintenance of which independence solemnly pledge their lives, their fortunes and their most sacred honor," is full of grandeur and moral sublimity. We may search, and vainly search, through the pages of history, and imagination can not conceive a grander or nobler spectacle.

"—Is there in the abyss,  
Is there among the adamant spheres  
Wheeling unshaken through the boundless void  
Aught that with half such majesty can fill  
The human bosom, as when Brutus rose,  
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,  
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm  
Aloft extending like eternal Jove  
When guilt brings down the thunder, called  
aloud  
On Tully's name, and shook the crimson sword  
Of Justice in his wrapt astonished eye,  
And bade the father of his country hail,  
For lo the tyrant prostrate on the dust  
And Rome again is free."

Each and every one of those patriots who signed this memorable Declaration, and who 100 years ago stood where we now stand, have passed away. This is the fiat of nature. Man in his best estate is but vanity. "His days are as grass; as a flower so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone and the place thereof shall know it no more." But heroic deeds and noble actions are not thus transient. Age can not wither them, and time only adds to their un fading lustre. Living proof of this is exhibited here to-day. The same exalted patriotism that animated your forefathers is cherished by their descendants. May we not hope and be-

lieve that the next Centennial will here be celebrated by admiring and patriotic posterity!

It is not proposed to condescend to examine the evidences as to the authenticity of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. It is true that it has been questioned by some carping critics; but they have been answered, and exhausted by argument from abler hands. The last, and not the least, is the fair, full and unanswerable argument of Gov. Graham, delivered in this place on 4th February, 1875. This is no longer an open question. Doubtless it was difficult for them to realize the great and daring deed done by the Convention of Mecklenburg more than a year in advance of the National Declaration. To these critics it seems as strange as it was to the Royal Governor Martin, who, in his dispatch dated June, 1775, to his government, stated that "it was a dissolution of the Laws, Government and Constitution of the country, and setting up a system of rule and regulation subversive of his Majesty's Government."

This is true, and just what was intended to be done. The National Declaration of 1776 is not more true and authentic than is the Mecklenburg Declaration of 20th May, 1775. The one is elaborate and extended, the other is more concise and clear. If the one was destined to become the Saviour of the country, the other was the forerunner; for it was truly as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way, make his paths straight." The one is the unanimous declaration of thirteen States, pledged to mutual support and co-operation; the other, without any support or hope of support, made the bold and dubious resolve. The one challenges our admiration, the other our veneration. Both are immortal. These papers introduced a new era of mankind. Lord Chatham declared in the English Parliament that he "must avow in all his reading and observation, that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can compare to the General Congress assembled at Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776."

Mirabeau said, "I ask if the powers that have the control of the civilized



globe have dared to read that manifesto of human rights, and then interrogate their consciences after the perusal. I ask if there is at this day a single government of Europe, which, judged by the principles of the American Declaration of Independence, is not divested of all its rights and all its power."

#### THE EFFECTS FOLLOWING THESE DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE.

not only upon our own country, but upon the destinies of the civilized world. At this period the civilized world was ruled by hereditary or military rulers, governing by the grace of God or gunpowder. England was ruled by George III. Although an amiable man, he was never distinguished for virtue or ability; almost an imbecile, and finally ended his days in insanity. France, under the despotic sway of Louis XVI., was ruled, not for the good of the people, but by the caprices of his dissolute court, Madame Barre and others. Pius VI. held the consciences of men and monarchs by his decrees from the Vatican. Spain was an absolute monarchy, and sunk in superstition and cruelty. Russia groaned under the absolute rule of the imperial, and not unspotted Catharine. What a change has been wrought since this period! That change has been accomplished by the principles of our Revolution, placing power where it only belongs—in the hands of the people. Its wonder-working and vivifying influences have pervaded every civilized government on earth. England is now but nominally a monarchy. There the liberty of the press and the citizen, the rights of person and property are as secure as in any portion of our Republic. Monarchy has no longer even a name in France; the cowl has been stripped from superstition; the torch of fanaticism has been struck from the hand of the inquisitor. Spain recently was a republic, and serfdom no longer exists in Russia.

The last letter that the author of the National Declaration of Independence ever wrote (dated 24th June, 1826, and he died the 4th July following) describes with prophetic beauty the wonderful consequences of this event. "May it be to the world, what I believe it will be to some parts sooner, to some later, but finally to all, the signal of arousing men to burst the chains with which ignorance and superstition had

persuaded them to bind themselves and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. All eyes are opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God.

There are grounds of hope for others and for ourselves. Let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them.

Such have been the effects of these Declarations. Other reminiscences than this Declaration cluster around this Centennial city of Charlotte and its environs. The heroic battle ground of King's Mountain, Ramsour's Mill, Hanging Rock and Cowan's Ford, are in its vicinity.

Here in Charlotte, on September 30, 1780, Maj. Wm. R. Davie, with a small body of troops, with Maj. Jos. Graham and Col. Locke, held Lord Cornwallis and the whole British army in check, on the retreat from which Locke was killed and Graham severely wounded.

Here, on the 3d of December, 1780, did the Fabius of America, General Nathaniel Greene, under orders from General Washington and Congress, take command of the Southern army, which had been for the time defeated and dispersed at Camden, under Gen. Gates, on 16th August, 1780. Here, on that day, Greene in general orders assumed the command, and "hoped that their misfortunes would cease, and victory and the glorious advantages attending it might be the future portion of the Southern army."

Here Cornwallis held his head quarters for a time, but he did not find Charlotte a bed of roses. Tarleton, who was with Lord Cornwallis, "has recorded in his Memoirs that the counties of Mecklenburg and Rowan (he calls it *Rohan*) were more hostile to England than any others in America. The vigilance and animosity of the surrounding districts, checked all the exertions of the well affected, and totally destroyed all communication between the King's troops and the loyalists in other parts of the province. No British commander could obtain any information in that position that would



facilitate his designs or guide his future conduct." Charlotte was styled by the British "a pleasant place, but a d--d rebellious village." The British foraging parties were constantly harrassed and fired upon. Attack was made at Polk's Mill (now called Catharine mills,) only two miles from town, on the British pickets. They received a severe repulse at McIntyre's, seven miles from Charlotte, on the Beattie's Ford road. The British army lay from 30th September to about 15 October, at Charlotte, on the field south of the town, then occupied by Thomas Spratt, now owned by Major Morrow. Lord Cornwallis had his head quarters in a white house on the corner from the old court house, second house from the corner. After the glorious battle of King's Mountain, 7th Oct., 1780, which in fact was the turning point of the Revolution—for soon after came the victory of the Cowpens, 17th Jan., 1781, then Guilford, 15th March, following, then Yorktown, 19th Oct., which closed the war,—Lord Cornwallis fell back from Charlotte to Wimsboro, S. C., to prevent annoyance, and departed suddenly at night. Many other incidents might be presented by history and tradition connected with this now flourishing city. It is hallowed by a thousand glorious reminiscences. We feel that it is almost holy ground, and we are disposed to obey the injunction given on Horeb to Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

"Of illustrious men," says Thucydides, "the whole world is their sepulchre." But there are some sacred spots which have been specially consecrated in the memories of all ages of mankind by the holy halo which surrounds the illustrious acts of patriots and martyrs. Of these is Marathon of Greece, Bannockburn of Scotland, and Lexington and Charlotte of America.

But chiefly in its glorious record is Charlotte, bound up with the event we this day commemorate, and the patriotic men who accomplished it.

We have handed down to us their names, and regret that neither tradition or history afford very much, or extended information as to the

LIVES, CHARACTER AND SERVICES OF  
THE SIGNERS OF THE MECKLENBURG  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Modesty and humility are the in-

separable companions of valor and virtue. Good men are always ready to do great deeds; they are satisfied with the consciousness of having done their duty.

They have too much modesty to laud their own actions; and whenever described by others, they

"Blush to find it fame."

Let us of the present age preserve the small store of information we possess. We are connecting links between the past and the present. Much that is known will perish with us, if not preserved. Let us then endeavor to imitate the gentle enthusiasm of Old Mortality, and to remove the decay which time is fast bringing over their monuments, to deepen the inscriptions, and revive the memory of their patriotism, their sacrifices, their sufferings, and their triumphs. For this pious purpose let us bring forth the lights that History affords us, which, like the power of her of Endor, can summon the spirits of the departed heroes from the dead, so that we can talk to them "as man talketh to man, face to face."

Unsatisfactory and glimmering as this interview may prove, yet it may inspire many among you to examine your family records, verify and preserve the traditions now fast fleeing away.

There are six persons of the family of Alexander on this record.

ABRAM ALEXANDER, the Chairman, has descendants present (Dr. Cyrus Alexander of Cabarrus County, his grandson.) He was born in 1718, and was the honored Chairman of the Inferior Court, and before and after the Revolution, a leading magistrate of this county. He was a member of the popular branch of the Assembly in 1774-75, with Thomas Polk as colleague.

During the war, as was to be supposed, there was but little use for courts or law. "There were no courts in North Carolina," says Josiah Quincey, in 1773.

From the retreat of Governor Martin in June, 1775, to the appointment of Governor Caswell in December, 1776, the judicial as well as the executive powers of the State were exercised by

1. A Provincial Council for the whole Province.

2. A District Committee of safety for each of the Judicial Districts—these were appointed by the Provincial Con-

gress that assembled at Halifax 21st August, 1775, and

3. A County Committee of Safety for each county of not less than twenty-one persons to be elected annually by the people of each county.

The President of the Council was Samuel Johnstone of Chowan Co. The members of the Provincial Council for this District (Salisbury) were Samuel Spencer and Waighstill Avery. The members for the District Committee of Safety for the Salisbury District were Griffith Rutherford, John Brevard, Hezekiah Alexander, Benjamin Patton, and others.

The County Committee, elected by the people annually in each county, executed such orders as they received from the Provincial Council, and the District Committees of Safety superintended the observance of the orders of the Continental and Provincial Congresses, and made such rules and regulations as the internal condition of each county demanded. They were not to inflict any punishment beyond imprisonment. No law suit could be commenced without leave of this County Committee, or proceed without their approbation. They met once in three months at the Court House of their respective counties to consult on public measures, to correspond with other committees, to disseminate information, and supply the place of Courts. A part of the duty of this committee was to prevent debtors from absconding by attaching their property until the debt was secured; to preserve the peace. These committees exercised these important functions until Justices were appointed by the Legislature and commissioned by the Governor.

It is a curious fact that a careful investigation of the records now in Mecklenburg County Court office will show that neither the Declaration of 20th May, 1775, nor of the 4th of July, 1776, obliterate or ignore the existence of this Court. This has been used as an argument against the Mecklenburg Declaration, but it is equally strong against the National Declaration.

The records prove that on the third Tuesday in July, 1776, it was ordered by the court "that the several dockets be continued."

The first change of the judicial power of this court that is recorded, occurred

on the third Tuesday in January, 1777. The records state thus:

"The Commission of the Peace for the State of North Carolina being read, Robert Harris, Esq., pursuant to a *dedimus* to him directed by His Excellency Richard Caswell, Esq., administered the oaths to Abram Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, David Reese, Robert Irwin and Ephriam Brevard, who also administered said oaths to Robert Harris, when they took their seats, and proclamation being made court was opened according to law."

We regret that so little is known of the life and services of this Chairman of the Convention. Will not some pious Æneas take upon his shoulders this noble Anchises and bear him safe from the waves of neglect and oblivion?

He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church for many years, and lies buried in the grave yard of Sugar Creek Church.

On his grave-stone is recorded

"Abram Alexander,  
Died 22d of April, 1786,  
Aged 68 years."

"Let me die the death of the righteous and my last end be like his."

ADAM ALEXANDER was of military tastes. He was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of a battalion of Minute Men, with Thomas Polk as Colonel and Chas. McLean as Major, by the Provincial Council held at Johnston Court House, 18th December, 1775, and Colonel of Mecklenburg County with John Phifer as Lieutenant-Colonel and John Davidson and George A. Alexander as Majors, by the Provincial Congress at Halifax, on the 4th of April, 1775.

HEZEKIAH ALEXANDER was more of a statesman than soldier, active and useful. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1728. He was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety for the Salisbury District by the Provincial Congress, which met at Hillsboro, 21st August, 1775, with General Griffith Rutherford, John Brevard, Benjamin Patton, and others—a position of much responsibility and power. He was appointed by the Provincial Congress in April, 1776, with William Sharp, on the Council of Safety. He was elected a member of the Provincial Congress from Mecklenburg County, which met at Halifax, November, 1776, and which framed the first constitution of the State, with Waighstill Avery, Robert

Irwin, John Phifer, and Zaccheus Wilson as colleagues. He was appointed by the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax, on the 4th April, 1776, Paymaster of the Fourth Regiment North Carolina Continentals—Thos. Polk, Colonel; James Thackston, Lieutenant-Colonel; and William Davidson as Major. He died 16th July, 1801, and lies buried in Sugar Creek Church grave yard. The inscription on his tomb-stone reads thus:

In Memory  
of  
Hezekiah Alexander,  
Who Departed this life July 16, 1801,  
Aged 73 years.

Of JOHN MCKNITT ALEXANDER we have more information than of the others. He was born in Pennsylvania, near the Maryland line, in 1733; served as an apprentice to the trade of Tailor; when his apprenticeship expired, at the age of 21, he emigrated to North Carolina; married in 1759 Jane Bane. He was enterprising, shrewd and honorable; he was member of the Provincial Assembly in 1772; one of the delegates that met at Hillsboro 21st August, 1775. He was a member of the Provincial Congress that met at Halifax on the 4th of April, 1776, with John Phifer and Robert Irwin as colleagues. He was the first Senator elected from Mecklenburg under the Constitution, 1777, with Waighstill Avery and Martin Phifer, in the Commons, as colleagues. He was an active participator in the Convention of the 20th May, 1775, and preserved for a long time the records, of which he gave copies to General William R. Davie, Dr. Hugh Williamson, and others. Unfortunately the original was destroyed in 1800, when the house of Mr. Alexander was burnt. He was one of the Trustees of the "College of Queen's Museum," which was afterwards changed to Liberty Hall. Mr. Alexander died on the 10th of July, 1817, and lies buried in Hopewell Church burying ground. He was for years a leading Elder in the Presbyterian Church, and by his walk and conversation its firm supporter.

It is singular that of the Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration so large a number were members of this denomination. One of them was a Presbyterian preacher (Rev. H. J. Balch) and others elders and prominent members of that church, which may be truly styled the Nursing Mother of Freemen.

WAIGHSTILL AVERY was also a signer of this Declaration. He was an eminent lawyer and a native of Connecticut, born in 1747 in the town of Groton; he was a graduate of Princeton (1766). [A family paper preserved by W. F. Avery, Esq., of Charlotte, proves that in the Revolutionary War there were eight brothers of this family and all patriots; some of them were massacred at Fort Griswold, and some perished at Wyoming Valley; some of this family still reside at Groton, Connecticut, and some at Oswego, and Seneca Lake, New York, and some moved to Virginia.] He studied law on the Eastern Shore of Maryland with Littleton Dennis. He came to North Carolina in 1769, obtained license to practice law in 1770, and settled in Charlotte. By his assiduity and ability he soon acquired many friends. He was an ardent advocate of liberty, but not of licentiousness. In 1771 he was taken prisoner by the Regulators at Yadkin Ferry, but not further molested by them. In 1778 he married near Newbern, Mrs. Leah Frank, daughter of William Probart, of Snow Hill, Maryland, a wealthy merchant there, and who died on a visit to London; her first husband lived and died in Newbern. He was a member of the Provincial Congress which met at Hillsboro on the 21st of August, 1775, one of the highest and most important positions in the State. In 1776 he was a delegate to the State Congress at Halifax, which met on the 12th of November to form a State Constitution, with Hezekiah Alexander, Robert Irwin, John Phifer and Zaccheus Wilson as colleagues. He was appointed to sign proclamation bills by this body. In 1777, with General John McDowell and John Sevier, he was commissioner to treat with the Cherokees.

On the 20th of July, 1777, subsequently with William Sharp, Joseph Winston, and Robert Lanier as associates, he made the treaty of the Long Island of the Holstein, with the Cherokees; a treaty made without an oath, and one that has never been violated. In 1777 he was elected (the first) Attorney General of North Carolina.

In 1780 while Lord Cornwallis was in Charlotte, the British set fire to his office destroying all his books and his papers. In 1781, he removed to Burke county, where he died in 1821,



leaving a Son the late Colonel Isaac T. Avery, and three daughters—one of whom married William Lenoir, another Thomas Lenoir, and the other Mr. Poor, of Henderson county, N. C.

REV. HEZEKIAH JAMES BALCH was born at Deer Creek, Hartford county, Maryland, in 1748. He was the uncle of Stephen B. Balch, of Georgetown, D. C. He graduated at Princeton in 1766, same class with Waighstill Avery, Oliver Ellsworth, of Conn., Luther Martin of Maryland, and others.

He came to North Carolina in 1769, as a Missionary to this region; appointed by the Synods of New York, and Philadelphia. He was the first Pastor of Rocky River and Poplar Tent Churches and remained so to the time of his death. He combined in his character, great enthusiasm with unflinching firmness. He did not live to see the warmest wish of his heart gratified, the independence of his country; and for which he was ready to give his life. He died in 1776, and lies buried in the grave yard of Poplar Tent Church in Cabarrus county. This is a copy of the marble over his grave:

"Beneath this marble are the mortal remains of Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch; first Pastor of Poplar Tent congregation and one of the original members of the Orange Presbytery. He was licensed a Preacher of the everlasting Gospel of the Presbytery of Donegal in 1766, and rested from his labors, A. D., 1776—having been Pastor of the united congregations of Poplar Tent and Rocky River about seven years. He was distinguished as one of a Committee of three who prepared the Declaration of Independence; and his eloquence, the more effectual from his acknowledged wisdom, purity of motive and dignity of character, contributed much to the unanimous adoption of that instrument on the 20th of May 1775."

There is no name among these signers around which clusters more ennobling recollections than that of EPHRAIM BREVARD. This family is of Huguenot descent.

On their famous march in pursuit of Greene from the Catawba to Dan River, (1781,) the British army plundered and burned the house of John Brevard his father; and for the reason that he had "seven sons in the rebel army." It is but truth to say that in general or-

ders, Lord Cornwallis was "highly displeased, and denounced these acts as a disgrace to the army." Ephraim Brevard who signed the Declaration, was the eldest son, born in Cecil county, Maryland. He had the misfortune to lose in childhood, one of his eyes; yet this did not disturb his studies, for he was liberally educated. He graduated at Princeton in 1768, in the same class with Adlai Osborne and Pierpont Edwards, and studied medicine. He settled in Charlotte. He was in the expedition with General Rutherford in 1776, against the Cherokees.

While engaged as one of the Teachers in the Queen's Museum, a company of the youths were raised to join in putting down the Tories; and he was appointed the Captain; they marched towards the Cape Fear, and on learning the defeat at More's Creek of the Tories, they returned.

Inheriting from his family a devotion to liberty and independence, he early became distinguished for his boldness and decision. He drew the resolutions which the convention adopted, and acted as one of the secretaries. He joined the army as a Surgeon and went to Charleston, where, with Lincoln in 1780, he was taken a prisoner. He suffered so much from confinement and unwholesome diet, that his health gave way; he was released, and returned home only to die. He reached the house of his friend and fellow patriot, John McKnit Alexander, where he died.

He married a daughter of Thomas Polk; one daughter survived him, who married Dickinson, of South Carolina, whose son fell in battle at Mexico.

He lies buried in the lot now occupied by A. Brevard Davidson, Esq., in Charlotte. On this same lot was located the College called the Queen's Museum, afterwards Liberty Hall.

RICHARD BARRY was another signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. He was born in Pennsylvania, of Scotch-Irish descent; he removed to Mecklenburg county, previous to the Revolution, and settled in Hopewell congregation, and married Anne Price. He acted for many years as a magistrate, and was in the army as a soldier, and present at the affair of Cowan's Ford, where he aided with others in disputing the passage of the British, when and where General Davidson was

killed. He and Daniel Wilson and others, buried the body by a torch-light in the grave-yard of Hopewell congregation.

"We buried him darkly at dead of night,  
The sod with our bayonets turning.  
By the struggling moon beams misty light,  
And our torches dimly burning."

He died the 21st of August, 1801, leaving several children. A. M. Barry, Esq., who resides near where his grandfather lived is the sole surviving grandson. Mrs. A. A. Harry, Mrs. G. L. Sample, Mrs. Jane Alexander, are the surviving grand-daughters.

JOHN DAVIDSON, another signer of this paper, was born in Pennsylvania, 1736. He was a member of the popular branch of the Assembly in 1771. He was appointed by the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in April 1776, a Field officer (Major) with Adam Alexander as Colonel, John Phifer Lieutenant Colonel, and George A. Alexander 2d Major. He was the maternal grandfather of Gov. William A. Graham. He married Violet, daughter of Samuel Wilson, whose sister was the wife of Ezekiel Polk.

He was a delegate with Joseph Graham to both conventions which considered the Federal Constitution. His military reputation was high; he was with Sumter in August, 1780, at the battle of the Hanging Rock, and was a General in the State. He was enterprising and successful in business. With Alexander Brevard and Joseph Graham he established Vesuvius Furnace, Terza Forge, and other iron works. He died in 1832, at the house of his son-in-law, Wm. Lee Davidson, and lies buried near Toole's Ford. He left several children. His eldest daughter, Rebecca, married Alexander Brevard; Isabella married Joseph Graham; Mary married Dr. McLean; another daughter married Harris; Violet married Wm. B. Alexander, son of John McKnit Alexander; Sally married Rev. Alexander Caldwell, a son of Dr. David Caldwell. His son Robert Davidson had no children. His son John married Sally Brevard, daughter of Adam Brevard. Robert married Margaret, daughter of Adlai Osborne.

ROBERT IRWIN was a prominent politician and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was a member from Mecklenburg county to the State

Congress which met in Oct. 1776, and which formed the first Constitution of the State, with Waightstill Avery, Ezekiah Alexander, John Phifer and Zaccheus Wilson as colleagues. He was Senator in the General Assembly in 1778 to 1783—and 1797 to 1800. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church. He died leaving seven children—and lies buried in Steel Creek church graveyard.

The name of WM. KENNON is among the signers of the Declaration. His name appears in the Proceedings of the Committee of Safety of Rowan county 1774, as Chairman; and the memorial of John Dunn shows that he was active in arresting said Dunn as a person dangerous to liberty; and with Mr. Willis, brother-in-law of Kennon, Adlai Osborne and Saml Spencer, seized said Dunn, and sent him to S. Carolina. He resided in Salisbury and was an Attorney at Law. He was in the first Congress in opposition to Royalty at Newbern in August 1774, and Commissary to the 1st Regiment in 1776.

NEAL MORRISON has three grandchildren now living, (1875)—James H. Morrison, aged 83, and Mrs. Margaret Wilson, residing in Mecklenburg county, and Mrs. Margaret Osborne, now living in Corinth, Mississippi.

BENJAMIN PATTON, another signer, was a man of iron firmness and of indomitable courage. Descended from the blood of the Covenanters, he had all their tenacity of purpose and purity of character. The devoted friend of liberty, he was among the first and foremost in the cause; he was a member of the popular branch of the Assembly in 1774. He was delegated by the people of Mecklenburg to meet the Provincial Congress at Newberne on the 25th of August, 1774. This was the first meeting of the representatives of the people, adverse and in open contempt of the royal power in North Carolina. The royal Governor, Martin, issued his proclamation against this meeting, as being without legal authority. This is an epoch in our history. It is true, it was not a battle or a conflict of arms, but it was the first act in a great drama, in which battles and blood were the direct and inevitable consequences. Had he had the power, Governor Martin would have seized every member of this body and tried

them for treason. He summoned his Council, but the Council, either alarmed or tintured with the spirit of the times, declared that "nothing could be done."

Tradition informs us, that Mr. Patton could not get a horse or any conveyance, for they had no railroads or stages then, and he walked from Charlotte to Newberne, rather than not be with those determined on liberty or death. Although advanced in years, he showed all the enthusiasm of youth. He was appointed by the Provincial Congress that met at Hillsboro on the 21st of August, 1775, Major of the 2nd Continental Regiment—Robert Howe, Colonel, Alexander Martin, Lieut. Colonel; Jas. Blount, Hardy Murfree and Henry Irwin Toole, were Captains in this Regiment. All distinguished in after life, and founders of large and influential families. He was a member from Mecklenburg of the Provincial Congress that met at Halifax on the 4th of April, 1776, with John McKnit Alexander and John Phifer, as colleagues, and by this body he was promoted to the Lieutenant Colonelcy of the 2nd Continental Regiment; Alexander Martin, Colonel, and John White Major. Of his military record in such high position, we know nothing, but with John Paul Barringer and Martin Phifer, as associates, he was a member of the Committee of Safety, formed for this county, with very full powers. They were a "terror unto evil doers." They held their meetings at the Red Hill on the Salisbury road. He died near Concord on the banks of the Irish Buffalo. No monument marks his grave.

"They carved not a line, they raised not a stone.

But left him alone in his glory."

JOHN PHIFER was a distinguished man among the men of '75. He was the son of Martin, who was a native of Switzerland, and of Margaret Blackwelder. The original name is spelled Phifer. He was born in 1745; he lived on Buffalo at Red Hill, known to this day, as Phifer's Hill. He was a member of the Popular Branch of the Assembly 1771. He was appointed by the Provincial Council which was held at the Court House in Johnston County in Dec. 1775, Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Battalion of Minute men, in the Salisbury district; of which Griffith Rutherford was Colonel, and John Paisly Major. He was a member

of the Provincial Congress that met at Hillsboro on 21st August, 1775, and also of that which met at Halifax on 4th April, 1776, with John McKnit Alexander and Robert Irwin as colleagues; and by that body appointed Lieutenant Colonel, of Col. Adam Alexander's Regiment. He was a member of the Provincial Congress at Halifax, Nov. 1776, from Mecklenburg, which formed the Constitution with Hezekiah Alexander, Waighstill Avery, Robert Irwin, and Zacheus Wilson, as colleagues. He married Catherine Barringer. His descendants have proved the valor and patriotism of their ancestry. His grand-son, General Charles Phifer, distinguished himself at Shiloh in our late civil war. He filled an early grave and lies buried at the Red Hill on the Salisbury Road. A decaying head stone marks his last resting place. Tradition informs us, that as the British army marched from Charlotte to Salisbury, his grave was desecrated by the troops. As the British did not march by this route to Salisbury, this tradition is a myth; if done, it was by other impious hands.

THOMAS POLK, the last signer which we shall notice; is a historic name in North Carolina as well as in our nation. He was the early, constant and enduring friend of liberty, the unfaltering opponent of power and oppression. He was with Abram Alexander member of the Assembly in 1771 and 1775, from Mecklenburg. He was appointed by the Provincial Council in 1775, Colonel of 2d Battalion of minute Men with Adam Alexander as Lieut. Col. and Charles McLean as Major.

As Colonel of Mecklenburg, he issued orders to each Captain's Company to select, and send delegates to the Convention, whose deeds we this day commemorate. This act alone entitles him to our gratitude.

By the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax on 4th April, 1776, he was appointed Colonel of the 4th Regiment of Continental Troops—with James Thackstone as Lieut. Col. and William Davidson as Major. The latter became distinguished as a General, and fell disputing the passage of Lord Cornwallis at Cowan's Ford 1st Feb. 1781. In 1781 he was appointed Brig. General on the death of Davidson.

When General Greene took command of the Southern army, Thomas



Polk was appointed to superintend the commissary department, a most troublesome and ungracious office at any time, but at this, with a country just then devastated and stripped by an invading army, most difficult to discharge with satisfaction. I have letters of General Greene in my possession, showing his high appreciation of Colonel Polk's services. He resigned in 1780, recommending William R. Davie, as a suitable successor. I have also in my possession, an original letter of his which I herewith present:

CAMP, YADKIN RIVER, Oct. 11, 1780.

*Gentlemen:*—I have the pleasure to inform you that on Saturday last, the noted Colonel Ferguson, with 150, fell on King's Mountain, 800 taken prisoners with 1,500 stand of arms. Cleaveland and Campbell commanded. A glorious affair. In a few days, doubt not, we will be in Charlotte, and I will take possession of my house, and his Lordship take the woods. I am gentlemen, with respect your humble servant,  
THOS. POLK.

He died at Charlotte in 1793, and lies buried in the graveyard of the Presbyterian Church. He married Susan Spratt, and left several children, among them was Col. Wm. Polk, who commenced his career in a campaign under his father, in the expedition against the Scoville Tories in the autumn of 1775; he was with Nash at Germantown in 1777, and with Davidson when he fell at the Catawba in Feb. 1781, and with Greene at Eutaw in Sept. 1781. He was severely wounded at the latter place, the effects of which he carried to his grave. He held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the army when the war closed. He returned to Charlotte and represented Mecklenburg county in 1787-'90-'91. He lived for a long time in Raleigh, holding a position as President of one of the Banks, where he died about 1830, leaving a widow who was a daughter of Col. Hawkins, and several children; among them Bishop Polk, of Louisiana, who was killed in the late civil war, while holding the position of General. General Thos. G. Polk (now dead) and Mrs. Kenneth Rayner, wife of Hon. Kenneth Rayner, a distinguished son of North Carolina, now residing in De Soto county, Miss., and one of the Judges of the Alabama Court of Claims (Geneva Commission.) One of the

brothers of Thomas Polk was Ezekial Polk whose grandson, Jas. K. Polk, was President of the United State, in 1845.

The Memoirs of the distinguished man, his life and services, and that of his decedents, would afford ample material for the Historian. We learn that efforts are being made to rescue from oblivion, these recollections, which will prove a most acceptable addition to our history.

We have now endeavored to present a rapid sketch of the lives and services of many of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Although compiled from authentic sources yet it doubtless contains errors; certainly, it is meagre in matter. Yet the errors, when detected, may be corrected; and the matter by research and industry may be much enlarged. Others with the same zeal, but more ability, will follow up these researches. We have only just opened the mine, others hands are we trust ready to explore its hidden wealth and develop its buried treasures! The field is large, but the laborers are few!

The names, the services of these illustrious ancestors, should be held in perpetual remembrance.

"These are the deeds which should not pass away  
And names that must not wither,  
Though the earth forgets her empires,  
With a just decay,  
The enslavers and the enslaved;  
Their death and birth."

We are informed by history that Xerxes, son of Darius, when reviewing his myriads, from a stately throne on the plains of Asia, suddenly shed a torrent of tears at the recollection that the multitude of men he then saw before his eyes in one hundred years should be no more.

No one now here, will ever see another Centennial!

Then, how impressive, and important, is the duty to preserve the memorials now extant, but rapidly fleeing away, of an event which marks the age, and immortalizes the actors. It should have an induring monument. While Bunker Hill lifts its proud column to the skies, raised by patriotism, and founded by liberality and consecrated by genius; while memorials of enduring marble present to posterity the form and lineaments of exalted characters of other sections of our country, shall North Carolina, with such glowing traditions, and pa-

triotic examples raise no memorial of her gallant ancestry?

Let this anniversary be decreed a holy day in our State, and a monument rise from the very spot to perpetuate its memory.

"Human beings," said Mr. Webster at the laying of the corner stone of the Bunker Hill monument, "are composed, not of reason only, but of imagination and sentiment; and that is neither wasted or misapplied which is appropriated to giving right direction to sentiments; and opening the proper springs of the human heart." In rearing a monument on the very spot where the first Declaration was made, we direct the mind by an elevated object to the moral causes that produced the great Revolution.

We dwell upon the pure hearted characters, the noble daring, and the chivalric patriotism by which it was achieved; and to the numberless blessings that have come down to us by its happy consummation.

Before this monument, age may rejoice in the fruits of his labors; from it youth may receive inspirations of patriotism by their example, and resolve to emulate their career of honor. In the language of the orator, just referred to, "we wish that this column, rising toward Heaven, amid temples dedicated to GOD, may produce in all minds a pious feeling of

dependence and gratitude. Let it arise until it meet the sun in his coming; let the earliest light of the morning gild it and parting day linger and play on its summit."

Then around the column of each annual anniversary; our State holiday, let the patriotism, the genius and the beauty of our people be gathered together, then and there to hear again the trials and the triumphs; the grievances and the glories of "the Men of Mecklenburg."

In the language of the Fifth Henry before Agincourt, may we not, anticipating these patriotic reunions, feel

He that outlives this day and comes safe home,  
Will stand on tip toe when this day is named.  
Old men forget, yet all shall not forget  
But they'll remember the deeds done this day.  
Then shall these immortal names  
Be as familiar in their mouths as household words,  
And all in their flowing cups be freshly remembered.

I have now finished my work. I have traced with a rapid hand our early history. I have shown the principles which formed the character of its early settlers; I have dwelt upon the Men of Mecklenburg and of Charlotte—which I have seen from a scattering village grow to a beautiful city—full of enterprise, energy and patriotism. I feel like the good old patriarch.

"Nunc Domine, dimitte in pacem."

I sincerely bid you farewell.

NOTES.—There were four Provincial Congresses which assembled in North Carolina previous to the Constitution:

1. On the 25th of August, 1774, at Newbern. John Harvey, Chairman; Benjamin Patton member from Mecklenburg.
2. 21st of August, 1775, at Hillsboro. Samuel Johnston, Chairman.
3. 4th of April, 1776, at Halifax. Samuel Johnston, Chairman; John Phifer, Robt. Irwin, John McNitt Alexander, members from Mecklenburg.
4. 12th November, 1776, at Halifax, (which on the 18th day of December, 1776, adopted State Constitution).—See *Journal*, p. 51. Richard Caswell, President; Waighstill Avery, Hezekiah Alexander, John Phifer, Robert Irwin, Zacheus Wilson, members from Mecklenburg.

NORTH CAROLINA before the Declaration of Independence of '76 showed the valor of her sons

1. At Alamance in 1771, against Governor Tryon.
2. The Scoville campaign (so-called from Scoville, the name of a British emissary,) Col. Polk of Mecklenburg, General Rutherford of Rowan, Col. Neel of Tryon, two companies of Continental troops, under Col. Alexander Martin, in conjunction with the troops from South Carolina, in December, 1775—called also the Snow Campaign.—*Gov. Graham's Address*, p. 100.
3. The battle of Moore's Creek against the Scotch Tories, 27th February, 1776.
4. The expedition of General Rutherford against the Cherokee Indians, 1776.

















